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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

GENERAL BOOKS AND BOOKS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

A History of All Nations from the Earliest Times. General Editor, JOHN HENRY WRIGHT, LL.D., Professor in Harvard University. Volumes I. and II. (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers and Company. 1905. Pp. xviii, 353; ix, 370).

THE general title-page names as authors of the work Charles M. Andrews, John Fiske, Theodor Flathe, G. F. Hertzberg, F. Justi, J. von Pflugk-Harttung, M. Philippon, Hans Prutz, F. Wells Williams; the general editor is Professor John Henry Wright, of Harvard University. The work consists of twenty-four volumes: five on Antiquity, five on the Middle Ages, ten on the Modern History of the Old World, three on the two Americas, and one an index-volume to the whole. The preface states that Vols. I.-XIX. are a carefully edited translation of the *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*, slightly condensed, with additions; an additional volume, by American scholars, brings the history of the Old World down to the present century, and three other volumes, by Fiske and Stephens, deal with the Western Hemisphere. The title of Vol. I. is 'Egypt and Western Asia in Antiquity, by F. Justi, Sara Y. Stevenson, and Morris Jastrow;' that of Vol. II. is 'Central and Eastern Asia in Antiquity, by F. Justi, F. W. Williams, M. Jastrow, and A. V. Williams Jackson.' The form is royal octavo. The editor, aided by Mr. G. W. Robinson, has read and revised manuscript and proofs of all the translated volumes, and has prepared analytical tables of contents for all the volumes. The whole is profusely illustrated.

The plan of the work is to give not a collection of monographs on the various nations, but a picture of the social and intellectual progress of the civilized world viewed as a community of peoples; the history is regarded as a drama in which each nation comes on the stage and acts its part at the appropriate time. Thus in Vols. I. and II. we have first the early history of Egypt and Babylonia, then the relations of these nations with each other, with Syria, Assyria and Israel, and later with Persia; India and China, however, stand apart, and of the history of Japan at this time nothing is known. Special attention is paid in these volumes to the results of recent excavations and to art and religion. An excellent introductory chapter on "prehistoric Egypt" is contributed by Mrs. Stevenson, Curator of the Egyptian Section in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania; a brief account is given of the efforts to penetrate into the pre-dynastic period, and the opinion is expressed that

the historical development was continuous, that King Mena (now known to be an historical person), though he represents a new starting-point of organization, was preceded by a long period of civilization, there being no cultural break between him and the time before him. The view, here favored, that the Egyptian language and civilization were not derived from Asia is probably correct. Various reconstruction theories, set forth by Petrie and others, are mentioned; but none of these can be regarded as more than hypotheses to be tested by future discoveries. In the succeeding accounts of Egypt, Babylonia, Syria, Assyria, the Hittites, the Israelites, the early Persians, the Parthians and the Sassanians, the narrative, though compressed, is clear, and historical verity is in general successfully kept apart from conjecture. In the early Hebrew history (down to the middle of the ninth century) there has been substituted for the German original a well-considered statement, in two chapters, by Professor Steenstra of the Cambridge Episcopal Theological School, a careful construction of the Biblical material in the light of sound modern investigation; and he has also contributed a chapter on the history of Hebrew literature, which is at the same time a sketch of the historical development of the Old Testament religion. It were greatly to be desired that the historical method might be employed more strictly in the description of the religions of Egypt and Babylonia, which in this work consist too largely of strings of names without a clear statement of the conditions that brought about successive modifications of the cults. The term "esoteric" used of the teaching of the Egyptian priests (I. 44, 50) may be misleading: it does not seem likely that they meant to conceal the higher religious thought from the people, since the hymns containing this thought were accessible to the public. The account of the Zoroastrian religion is good, though it is an exaggeration to say (II. 182) that it was superior to the religions of other ancient peoples. Two chapters, by Professor Williams of Yale, give brief sketches of China and Japan; he is disposed to put the beginnings of Chinese civilization as far back as the year 3000 B. C., though the early history is involved in obscurity. Japanese recognizable history begins, he thinks, hardly earlier than 1500 years ago. These two volumes constitute a much-needed guide in the study of ancient history that both the general reader and the specialist may consult with profit. A few slips are corrected by the editor in footnotes.

C. H. T.